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2 August 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT : The Soviet Air Show -- As Treated in the McNamara Report to the President, the Briefing of the Stennis Subcommittee, and the JCS cable to Major Commands.

- REFERENCES:
1. Letter from Deputy Secretary of Defense to DCI, dated 24 July 1961 (Report to President of 14 July, attached).
  2. Report of Hearing before the Preparedness Investigation Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Armed Services, 18 July 1961.
  3. JCS Message 999632, 26 July 1961 (DA IN 129730)

General

1. Many differences in these three accounts of the Soviet Air Show of 9 July stem from two basic factors: (a) the purpose for which they were prepared, and (b) timing. The JCS report is lengthier and far more detailed, reflecting the requirements of its military recipients. The McNamara report to the President and the Stennis briefing, both tailored for civilian policymakers, concentrate upon highlights of the show. The JCS report also benefits from the fact that it was prepared some 8 to 12 days later than the other accounts, by which time

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code-names had been selected for the aircraft, some additional facts were available, and intelligence evaluations had firmed up somewhat.

2. However these factors do not explain the difference in tone between the McNamara report to the President and the other two accounts. The McNamara report is couched in terms of surprise; this is mitigated, however, by the covering letter to the President, which does not convey an impression of alarm. The other reports indicate that despite the display of a number of new or modified aircraft, there were few surprises. Succeeding portions of this memorandum will note major differences in the reporting on the more important combat aircraft and in the conclusions of the three reports.

#### Strategic Bombers

3. All three reports are in general agreement as to the range and speed characteristics of the supersonic "dash" medium bomber, BLINDER, and note that one of these was carrying an air-to-surface missile (ASM). This is identified

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as a new ASM in the JCS report and the Stennis briefing, and the existence of such a missile is suggested by a sentence on modification of BADGER in the McNamara report. The new ASM, not previously estimated, is larger than the 100 n.m. AS-2 and smaller than the 350 n.m. AS-3; this is the first evidence of its development. The statement in the McNamara report that the display of 10 BLINDERS "indicates a buildup in operational units . . . greater than currently estimated" is contradicted by NIE 11-8-61 (7 June 1961) which estimates that "about 30 have been produced to date" (para. 86) and that a few "probably have now entered service" (para. 85). These estimates were included in the Stennis briefing.

4. The equipment of BADGERS and BEARS with ASMs is noted in all three reports. The Stennis briefing and the JCS report indicate that these are the previously estimated AS-2 (100 n.m.) and AS-3 (350 n.m.) missiles. Modifications to the BEAR to accommodate these missiles are noted in all three reports, and JCS suggests that the aircraft so modified

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possibly do not have an alternate bombing capability. The McNamara report concludes on the basis of the extensive modification of BEAR and BADGER that "the Soviet emphasis on air-to-surface missiles . . . was not entirely anticipated," and in an opening paragraph expresses the judgment that "there are . . . indications of developments beyond present estimates in the coupling of air-to-surface missiles with aircraft." Similarly, the JCS report states that the increased use of air-to-surface missiles was forecast "though not to the extent indicated." Whatever these statements may mean, the subject of air-to-surface missiles is covered extensively in national estimates. For example, NIE 11-5-61 (25 April 1961) describes the development and characteristics of AS-1, AS-2, and AS-3 (paras. 69-79 and Table II). NIE 11-4-60 (1 December 1960) notes the deployment of ASMs to Naval Aviation (para. 89) and to Long Range Aviation (para. 35). NIE 11-8-61 (7 June 1961) estimates actual numbers of ASMs now operational (paras. 96-97).

5. The three reports identify BOUNDER as a prototype. However, the Stennis briefing and the JCS report describe the shortcomings of this design in some detail. The McNamara

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report refers only to its development potential, a matter concerning which there is no agreed estimate within the intelligence community.

Attack Aircraft

6. All three reports note the display of the super-sonic FIREBAR, described as an "attack type" aircraft (McNamara), a "fighter-bomber" (JCS), and a "tactical fighter bomber or light jet bomber" (Stennis briefing). The statement in the McNamara report that aircraft in this category had not been specifically estimated is correct. We can find no support in the recent national estimates for the JCS statement that "we had expected such aircraft but had no reliable evidence on which to base a forecast." The display of nine FIREBARs was cited as evidence in the Stennis briefing that this aircraft is operational.

Fighters

7. Both the JCS report and the Stennis briefing identify FIDDLER as an all-weather, long-range interceptor, reflecting

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the current views of the intelligence community. Development of an interceptor aircraft of this type had not been previously estimated. The description of this aircraft as a light bomber in the McNamara report apparently reflects an earlier view. The JCS report and the Stennis briefing note that FIDDLER is armed with a new, large air-to-air missile, but estimate that this aircraft could be adapted to tactical use.

8. The three reports note the display of another all-weather interceptor prototype, FLIPPER. The JCS report states that "our estimates included an all-weather interceptor of this type." However, the McNamara report states that "performance indicated is considerably above that estimated for future Soviet fighters." Actually, estimated characteristics of this aircraft are quite similar to those estimated for the next generation of Soviet interceptors in NIE 11-3-60 and NIE 11-3-61. (Soviet aircraft which have been estimated but not actually observed are not given nicknames by Western intelligence.)

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Conclusions

9. The three reports are in general agreement on the propaganda motivations involved in the air show. They also agree that it provided evidence of continued Soviet development of manned aircraft systems. However, there is some disagreement as to the extent of Soviet progress in this field. The McNamara report holds that "certain qualitative progress was beyond that estimated by the US" and that "intelligence estimates had not anticipated this continued improvement to the extent shown." The JCS report asserts that the air show "confirmed the estimated continued comprehensive Soviet research and development program in aircraft and aircraft armament" and that "these aircraft do not represent any advance in state-of-the-art," but rather "the result of continued steady development." This was also the tone of the Stennis briefing, which characterized the air show as a "pretty tangible demonstration of a broad spectrum of development in manned systems" and "part of a mixed force the Soviets seem to be pursuing." The views in the Stennis briefing and the JCS

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report more correctly reflect the current national estimates. Although one or two aircraft types represent unexpected directions in Soviet research and development, we would caution that aircraft displayed in previous air shows have not always been selected for production and operational use.



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INTELLIGENCE STATUS OF SELECTED EQUIPMENT DISPLAYED IN SOVIET AIR SHOW

	<u>In The McNamara Report</u>	<u>In The National Estimates</u>
BEAR (Equipped with AS-3)	Extent of ASM equip- ment not foreseen.	Known (NIE 11-5-61, NIE 11-4-60) 100 AS-3's estimated operational (NIE 11-8-61).
BADGER (Equipped with AS-2)	Extent of ASM equip- ment not foreseen.	Known (NIE 11-5-61, NIE 11-4-60) 500 AS-1 and AS-2 estimated operational (NIE 11-8-61).
BLINDER	Display of 10 indicates buildup greater than estimated.	A few estimated opera- tional and about 30 produced (NIE 11-8-61).
New ASM (Carried by BLINDER)	Not noted -- suggested by modified BADGER.	Not known -- future ASM of longer range estimated (NIE 11-5-61).
FIDDLER (Long-range interceptor)	Described as "light bomber".	Development not estimated.
New AAM (Carried by FIDDLER)	Not noted.	Not specifically estimated -- development of new AAMs foreseen (NIE 11-5-61).
FLIPPER (All-weather interceptor)	Says not estimated.	Development estimated (NIE 11-3-60 and NIE 11-3-61).
FIREBAR (Supersonic fighter- bomber)	Says not estimated.	Not estimated.

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	<u>In The McNamara Report</u>	<u>In The National Estimates</u>
FLASHLIGHT B	Not specifically noted.	Known since 1956 but not estimated operational.
MAIL (Turboprop flying boat)	Not specifically noted.	Known -- characteristics included in NIE 11-4-60.

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